

Christmas Eve

All-Ages Service with Pageant

Gathering Hymn: "Once in royal David's city"

Hymnal #102, verses 1 - 3, 6

The congregation stands.

The Advent and Christmas candles are lit during the hymn.

Opening Acclamation

Officiant 'Do I not fill heaven and earth?' says the Lord.

All **Now the Word is made flesh and laid in a narrow manger.**

Officiant From eternity to eternity you are God,

All **and now we see you as a newborn child.**

Celebrant O God the Son, Lord Jesus Christ, highest and holiest, who humbled yourself to share our birth and our death: bring us with the shepherds and the wise ones to kneel before your holy cradle, that we may come to sing with your angels your glorious praises in heaven; where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, world without end.
Amen.

The Finishing & Blessing of the Crèche

Celebrant O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament, that animals should see the new-born Lord, lying in a manger! Alleluia! The Word was made flesh.

People **And dwelt among us.**

Celebrant Let us pray. Almighty God, who in the Incarnation of your Son has revealed to us the holiness of creation, be pleased to bless and hallow this image of his sacred birth, so that those who gaze upon it may behold this mystery, whereby humanity shares in your very nature; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

Reader A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

The Christmas Pageant

Scene I: Luke 1:26-38

Rev. Miranda sets the scene.

Reader

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, to a young woman who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David's house. The young woman's name was Mary. When the angel came to her, he said, "Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!" She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. Look! You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over Jacob's house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom." Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen since I have never been intimate with a man?" The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God's Son. Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled 'unable to conceive' is now six months pregnant. Nothing is impossible for God." Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Carol: The Angel Gabriel

Blue Hymnal #265, verses 1 & 2

**The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady, Gloria!"**

**For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honor thee,
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favored lady, Gloria!"**

Scene II: Luke 1:39-49, 52-55

Rev. Miranda sets the scene.

Reader

Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. She entered Zechariah's home and greeted her cousin Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her." Then Mary said, "With all my heart I glorify the Lord! In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior. He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant. Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored because the mighty one has done great things for me. Holy is his name! He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed. He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy, just as he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

Carol: In the bleak midwinter

Blue Hymnal #112, verses 1 & 2

**In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone.
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.**

**Our God, heav'n cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee way when he comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter, a stable place sufficed
The Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.**

Scene III: Matthew 1:19-24

Rev. Miranda sets the scene.

Reader

Joseph, Mary's husband was a righteous man. When he learned that she was pregnant, he didn't want to humiliate her, so he decided to call off their engagement quietly. As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled: "Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will call him, Emmanuel." *Emmanuel* means "God with us." When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife.

Carol: "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Hymn #79, verses 1 & 2

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.**

Scene IV: Luke 2:1-7

Rev. Miranda sets the scene.

Reader

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Carol: “What child is this?”

Hymnal #115, verses 1 & 2

**What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.**

**Why lies he in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear: For sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.**

Scene V: Luke 2:8-14

Rev. Miranda sets the scene.

Reader

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord’s angel stood before them, the Lord’s glory shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David’s city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, “Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!”

Carol: “Angels We Have Heard On High”

Hymnal #96, verses 1 & 2

**Angels we have heard on high, singing sweetly through the night,
And the mountains in reply echoing their brave delight.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why these songs of happy cheer?
What great brightness did you see? What glad tidings did you hear?
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

Scene VI: Luke 2:15-20

Rev. Miranda sets the scene.

Reader

When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go right now to Bethlehem and see what’s happened. Let’s confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.” They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

Carol: “O Come, all ye faithful”, v. 1 & 3

Hymnal #83, verses 1 & 4

**I O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

Continued

**4. See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze.
We too would thither been our joyful footsteps.
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

Homily

The Rev. Dr. Miranda Hassett

The Prayers of the People

The people respond with the text in bold.

Intercessor In peace let us pray to the Lord.
In this holy night there was no room for your Son in the inn.
Protect with your love those who have no home, and all who live in poverty.
Holy God,

People **hear our prayer.**

Intercessor In this holy night your Christ came as a light shining in the darkness.
Bring comfort to all who suffer in the sadness of our world,
especially those whom we name now, out loud or in our hearts:
The people may name those who are suffering.

Intercessor Holy God,

People **hear our prayer.**

Intercessor In this holy night the angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth.'
Strengthen those who work for peace and justice in our nation and the world.
Holy God,

People **hear our prayer.**

Intercessor In this holy night strangers welcomed the Holy Family. Bless our homes and all those
with whom we share our lives, and help us show kindness whenever we can.
Holy God,

People **hear our prayer.**

Intercessor In this holy night heaven is come down to earth, and earth is raised to heaven.
Hold in your hand all those who have passed through death in the hope of your
coming kingdom, especially those whom we miss tonight:
The people may name their beloved dead.

Intercessor Holy God,

People **hear our prayer.**

Intercessor In this holy night Christians the world over celebrate Christ's birth.
Open our hearts that God may be born in us today.
Holy God,

People **hear our prayer.**

Celebrant Loving God, in this holy night angels and shepherds worshipped the newborn
King. Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Mary, Joseph and the
saints through the One who is your Word made flesh, our Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Peace

Celebrant Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace. The peace of the Lord be always with you!

All **And also with you!**

Announcements

Offertory Hymn: "Dost thou in a manger lie"

Hymnal #97

The purpose of the Offering is to acknowledge God as the source of all that we have and to make a thankful response for all that God has given us. The offerings we present include our monetary gifts, placed in the collection basket; the bread and wine of the Eucharist, carried forward on behalf of the congregation; and the offering of our selves, our souls and bodies, to serve God in our work on earth.

At the Presentation of the Gifts

Celebrant Word made flesh, Life of the world, in your incarnation you embraced our poverty; by your grace, may we share in your riches. **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving

The congregation stands.

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Celebrant It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your son Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

[Bells may be rung]

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Celebrant We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son.
For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

Celebrant On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

[Bells may be rung]

Celebrant After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

[Bells may be rung]

Celebrant Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

All **We remember his death, we proclaim his resurrection,
we await his coming in glory.**

Celebrant And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all, presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine. We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant.

Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, bring all things into communion with your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

Celebrant By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever.

All **AMEN.**

[Bells may be rung]

The Lord's Prayer

Please pray in the language of your heart.

Celebrant As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

New Zealand form (adapted):

**Loving God, may your name be held holy,
your reign spread among us,
and your will be done well.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
From all that binds and burdens us, free us and
help us free others.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too sharp to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, save us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is
love, now and forever. Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant Behold the Body of Christ!

People **May we become what we receive.**

Celebrant The gifts of God for the people of God.

Candle-lighting & Communion Hymn: "Silent Night"

Hymnal #111

1 Silent night! holy night! All is calm, all is bright

'Round yon virgin mother and child, holy infant, so tender and mild,

Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight.

Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing Alleluia:

Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

3 Silent night! holy night! Son of God, Love's pure light

Radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,

Jesus, Lord, at thy birth; Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Prayer After Communion

Celebrant Let us pray.

People **Creating and sustaining God, whose Word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem: may the light of faith illumine our hearts and shine in our words and deeds; through the One who is Christ the Lord. Amen.**

The Blessing

Celebrant May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Officiant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God!**

Sending Hymn: "Joy To the World"

Hymnal #100